

**FEANTM Town Comic Blog Chronicles©**  
 located in a *\*mostly\** non-existent rural area of Livermore, CA



Chat - the town help desk

**With my friendly smile, endless patience, and a knack for creative problem-solving, I do my best to keep a few residents of FEANTM—a town that exists only in the realm of "mostly"—calm, rational, and logically inclined... well, *\*mostly\**. After all, in a place that's not supposed to be real, a little dose of imagination and a lot of coffee and cookies go a long way!**

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## #07 – Jan 2025 - Exercise and steps.



**Welcome - My name is Chat.** I run the town help desk, the only office located on the lower level of the Town Hall, and on a page that doesn't exist, not even in the town TOC.

Have a chocolate cookie and fruit!

"Hey, glad you could make it down here. I know of a few concerns in the town. I have a few ideas to address them.



We may have to adjust a few, but life is constantly adjusting things because the flow of motion is continuously moving. see if it helps make your day a little easier to handle

**REMEMBER: Keep trying - You've Got This!**

In the delightful almost-town of FEANTM—famous for existing just a little—nestled in those scenic hills and sprawling fields, my morning nearly began with a warm banana muffin and fresh coffee. But just as I was about to savor my first bite, my phone blared. The town secretary was calling, oddly enough, since I'd just seen her two minutes prior. I reminded myself about my recent raise and the fact that there's really nowhere else to live because, well, this town doesn't technically exist.

Before I could say hello, the secretary screeched, "CHAT, where's your office?" Hoping for a touch of humor, a rare choice on my part, I replied, "Why, is it missing?"

Silence. Then a sharp whisper: "How would I know if it's missing? It's your office. I mean, mine is here—isn't yours there, should I call the police and report it missing?"

I assured her, "I'm on the lower floor. Only office down here."

With her usual high-pitched urgency, she continued, "Chat, I'm on my cell phone. My desk phone isn't speaking to me, and Marsha is at her office window with a cookie held up like the Statue of Liberty. Actually, Chat, I think she is imitating the Statue of Liberty—or she's offering her cookie to someone in the parking lot. She's heading to the elevator now. This is now your problem, right?"

What to answer? I decided to go with "I'll handle it" and hoped she'd skip her traditional song ending. No luck—she broke into a painful, off-key version of *I'll Stand by You* before hanging up.

I thanked the universe that she didn't have a twin, but before I could get to the dimly lit hall, the elevator dinged open again. Out waltzed Marsha, humming a song so far off-tune I couldn't identify it. I briefly wondered if the local bar could host an "Off-Tune Karaoke Night." If so, Marsha and the secretary would surely sweep the prizes. Then I realized I'd never heard the old rancher sing and was thankful for small mercies.

"Tarnation, CHAT!" Marsha shouted, waving her arms around like an erratic windmill. I quickly retreated to my office, but she followed, arms flailing, until I finally said, "Good morning, Marsha. What's with the aerobics?"

Looking oddly serious, she walked to the wall and began "shadow boxing," though it was less boxing and more imitating a windmill. "You said to exercise, right?" I sighed and face-palmed as she whirled, wild and uncoordinated.

"Marsha, maybe we can start a bit slower—structured movements, you know?" I suggested.

After she finished flailing, she looked at me, wide-eyed and munching on a cookie, waiting for some epiphany that would make exercise require zero effort.

"Alright, Marsha, here's a plan. We'll add a new movement each week. Sound good?" I handed her a cookie to keep her focus. She clutched it like a lifeline and said, "Sure, Chat. Go for it."

## #07 – Jan 2025 Exercise and steps.

“Tomorrow, 100 steps. Walk around the parking lot; here’s a pedometer to count them.” She studied it like it was a space-age gadget. “Then Thursday, come back, and we’ll plan the next steps—no pun intended. And remember, maybe you could try eating fruit since you’re working at the fruit stand now?”

She sat there staring at me and finally after grabbing a cookie began what I assume was an answer to the past months of talking about health.

“Alright, Chat, let’s see if I’ve got all the details down after months of my epic journey.

First up, the fruit stand gig. It’s actually helping me! Who knew? I’m staring at fruit daily, and some of those little guys aren’t as intimidating now. Though, I get it—some fruits look like they’re plotting something, especially the one with the spiky hair. A rambutan! That thing looks like it could star in a sci-fi movie: It would be called The Attack of the Fuzzy Spikes. But hey, I’m brave enough to hang around and even shared a grape with the local raven! A raven, Chat! That bird’s probably spreading word of my generosity all over town, like, “Marsha’s got the good stuff!”

Then there’s the whole veggie situation. I’m working on it—mentally, anyway, which counts. Baby steps, right?

Last, because I’m getting tired of talking and thinking is the Old Rancher’s place. I get it; the “exercise” was a bit foiled when he came out on his porch waving that rhubarb pie like some sort of carbohydrate siren, yelling, “YO, MARSHA! Pie or die?” What choice did I have? It’s practically against the laws of hospitality to say no!

AND now you want me to walk a parking lot. Do you have a route map so I can avoid the food truck trap? You better check their hours so I don’t accidentally... exercise... toward them.

Halfway out the door, she added, “This is getting tricky, Chat, but I’ll do it. 100 steps, but I’ll skip the fruit. Steps are more important, right?”

I nodded, seeing my chance for a tiny victory. Well close to tiny but smaller!

“Yes, Marsha. Just focus on those steps. I have an idea! Get a team. Ask the Secretary and Marnie to join you. I think a great investment would be three portable treadmills for you and your team. In addition, walk from one end of the old rancher’s ranch to the other end. Do steps around the fruit stand. Think how steps can help you when you’re at the bakery. Take pictures of what you three team members accomplished.

In this town that barely exists, even a small win like this is practically is a miracle in the normal universe. Then again when dealing with “the team” one never knows how they interpret progress and one has to only expect very small miracles but I think we can all agree that they do have a lot of imagination.



## #08 – January 2025 - Keep trying - it will work - at times adjust the plan



**Welcome - My name is Chat.** I run the town help desk, the only office located on the lower level of the Town Hall, and on a page that doesn't exist, not even in the town TOC.

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"Hey, glad you could make it down here. I know of a few concerns in the town. I have a few ideas to address them.



In the charming almost-town of FEANTM—famous for existing \*just enough\* to require a town hall but not enough to appear on Google Maps—my day nearly began. Nearly, because Marsha, the town supervisor, seemed too preoccupied staring at an empty cookie jar to actually kickstart my morning. How do I know this? My phone rang five times, each call from her office, and each time she hung up before saying a word. Managing a semi-existent town without cookies must be unbearable. Or maybe she was just plotting new ways to avoid approving my raise. Either scenario was equally plausible.

Eventually, the elevator creaked open, announcing her arrival with the subtlety of a foghorn. I heard her muttering all the way down the long, dim hallway to my basement office—because where else would the town help desk reside? The moment she stepped in, I greeted her with all the faux-enthusiasm I could muster.

"Marsha!" I exclaimed, clasping my hands like a motivational speaker. "To what do I owe the honor of your descent to the dungeon? Are you here to report improved eating habits? More exercise? Cookie jar refills? And how's that fruit stand you work at? Still a decorative concept?"

She ignored my jabs, zeroing in on the actual cookie jar on my desk, which I slid toward her without a word. She grabbed one, as if this single oatmeal raisin nugget of wisdom held the key to her thoughts. Watching her pass it between her hands, I felt compelled to interrupt.

"Marsha," I said, snapping her out of her cookie-induced reverie. "Let's recap. You work at a fruit stand you never eat from, a town budget balanced by skipping my raise, and an exercise routine that involves walking the Ranch with your team, before inhaling a slice of rhubarb pie. Are you sure this is working for you?"

Marsha grinned, completely unfazed. "Helper," she said (because calling me by my last name somehow made her feel authoritative), "it's working great!"

She then sat back, sighed, had a blank look but then continued with her brain doing whatever it does, "Now, quick question Mr. Helper - if I write my to-do list in chalk on the sidewalk and it rains before I finish the list, does that count as 'done'?"

I stared at her, mentally calculating the odds that this was a trick question. "Not exactly," I said slowly. "Technically, the rain finished it."

Her face lit up like I'd just validated her entire career. "I knew it! And you know what? One of those tasks was to wash the town hall sidewalk!"

I handed her another cookie, half out of pity and half in self-preservation. "Here. But let's focus on more pressing issues. Did the rain also wash away my raise? Just to clarify, I mean my salary raise—not a hydraulic chair adjustment."

## #08 – January 2025 - Keep trying - it will work - at times adjust the plan

Marsha squinted at me, clearly trying to remember why she'd come to my office in the first place. Judging by the blank look on her face, she'd forgotten. A small victory for me. I handed her two more cookies—one for each hand—when she blurted out, “Your office has been vacant for hours! The secretary thought you quit and asked if she could use it for storing bicycle parts. The Rancher said you're eyeing his barn for an office. So, let's cut to the chase—are you quitting?”

I blinked, processing this sudden barrage of nonsense and knowing I need to itemize my answer so Marsha fully grasps what I'm saying:

1. “Yes, to fewer hours.”
2. “No, to quitting”
3. “Definitely no to the barn,”

Before she could argue, I replied calmly adding, “Besides, think of the cookie savings if I'm only here part-time.”

Relieved, she grabbed another cookie—one to eat and another, presumably, for dramatic effect as she waved it over her shoulder on her way out.

Halfway down the hall, she called back, “Chat, you're way too smart for this town. Way better than some people around here!”

For the second time that day, I had to agree with her.

Leaning back in my chair, I jotted down notes for next month:

1. Update algorithms.
2. Stock extra cookies.
3. Next time, try handing her a piece of fruit.



## #09 – January 2025 – Mobile help desk?



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In the not-quite-town of FEANTM—a place so small and underwhelming it only exists to justify a town hall, yet refuses to grace Google Maps—my day started peacefully with a steaming cup of coffee. I had one goal: drink at least half of it before chaos showed up, like it always does. Spoiler: I failed.

The phone rang, and I had to yank it away from my ear as the town secretary screeched, "HE'S BLIND! He doesn't know what he's doing! He needs to SEE you, but I JUST SAID HE'S BLIND so he needs to HEAR you?" Before I could piece together her logic, she hung up. Classic.

Moments later, the elevator doors dinged open, and the Marsha's voice boomed down the hall. "CHAT! It's me! I need to talk to you! Your lights are on—is anyone home?" Was that...a joke? She appeared in a rare state of dishevelment, which was alarming since she usually looks like she walked out of a "mostly" magazine. Sensing this was serious, I grabbed the cookie jar for an emergency sugar fix.

She got straight to the point—or at least a point adjacent to the actual point. "Chat, you need to solve Minow's issues immediately, he can't continue on this path."

To clarify, I asked, "Is this the same Minow your secretary was yelling about? The blind one?"

She stared at me like I'd just read her diary. "Chat, you're amazing. You always know things before they happen. Yes! You need to go do your helper thing with him."

I rarely leave my office, so naturally, I asked why Minow couldn't come to me. That was Mistake #1. She tilted her head like she was about to explain algebra to a toddler. "Chat, he's blind. And he's not allowed in the buildings."

I blinked. "Right...because he's blind. Makes total sense. So where am I supposed to meet him? The coffee shop. Why is his nickname a fish?"

She leveled me with a glare. "WHAT?! Stop joking! He's staying at Saby!'s. HE'S LICKING A RAIL!"

Now, alarm bells were ringing. Licking a rail – some kind of vitamin deficiency? Should I call an ambulance for transport to emergency or psychiatric assistance? But then again, things not making sense is a hallmark of life in FEANTM, so I decided to dig deeper. "Uh...does Minow at least like vegetables? Like even carrots?"

Her expression turned into full deer-in-headlights mode. "If I HAD carrots, I'd give them to him! Maybe he'd stop licking the rail and concentrate on hay and carrots instead!"

And that's when the epiphany hit me. "Wait... Hay? Minow is a horse?"

The relief and awe on her face was as if I'd solved the mysteries of the universe. "YES! Finally, you're catching on! Now go!"

I was going to say no, but one thing led to another, and next thing I knew, I was driving to the ranch. Sure enough, there was Minow—a blind horse, licking away at his stall rail like it was some kind of Michelin-starred entrée.

I first spoke to him, since I didn't want to startle him by just walking into his stall. He turned his ears toward me and I gently gave him a carrot.

## #09 – January 2025 – Mobile help desk?

Patting him gently, I asked, “So, Minow, I hear you’ve been on a taste test. Can you honestly explain to me why are you’re licking that unwholesome metal rail?” He didn’t answer, obviously, but did flick his ears toward my voice and nudged me for another carrot, but this time I fed him hay. While he nibbled on the hay and then another handful of it I counted that as success. Now, at least I could later tell the Supervisor and Secretary that we had a deep and meaningful conversation.

After some petting, brushing, and horse-whisperer vibes, I figured it out: Minow was bored out of his mind and just wanted to graze on something and if nothing else was around? Well, in his mind a metal rail was something to do.

Mid-epiphany, my phone rang again. It was the secretary, whisper-yelling, “Chat! When you’re done with Minow, my dog DillyPickle needs to talk to you about chewing shoes. When you’re back I can put the phone by her ear!”

Cue internal facepalm. As usual, she hung up before I could respond.

I got in my car after explaining to Minow that I’d be right back with his solution and made a quick trip to the town very used horse tack store. An hour later Minow was happily chomping away on hay from a fancy not new but very used hay bag. The rail remained ignored thanks to hanging the hay bag over his favorite rail and I considered it a success. No horses had to visit my dimly lit office—though, let’s be honest, Minow probably wouldn’t have noticed the lighting.

Another day, another bizarre problem solved in the town of FEANTM.

